

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 041381

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, AO, SF

SUBJECT: CURRENT FOREIGN RELATIONS: ISSUE NUMBER 7,
FEBRUARY 18, 1976

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AF CONTRIBUTION TO ISSUE NUMBER 7 OF
CURRENT FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR POST INFORMATION. FULL TEXT
OF CFR BEING POUCHED PER REGULAR SCHEDULES.

2. BEGIN QUOTE:

AF - ANGOLA: CONVENTIONAL WAR ENDS (CONFIDENTIAL)

OVERWHELMED BY SUPERIOR CUBAN FORCES, FNLA AND UNITA HAVE
LARGELY GIVEN UP CONVENTIONAL FIGHTING. UNITA IN PARTI-
CULAR SHOWS SIGNS OF REVERTING TO GUERRILLA WARFARE IN THE
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CENTRAL PLATEAU AREA WHERE THEIR TRIBAL SUPPORT IS

LOCATED. THE CUBAN FORCES ARE CONTINUING TO PRESS SOUTH AND A CONFRONTATION WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS ENTRENCHED WITHIN ANGOLA IS POSSIBLE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

MPLA CONTROL OVER THE 70 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION THAT OWES ETHNIC ALLEGIANCE TO FNLA/UNITA WILL BE VERY LOOSE

AND, FOR THE NEAR FUTURE, DEPEND PRIMARILY ON CUBAN TROOPS TO INSURE AGAINST A REKINDLING OF THE CIVIL WAR. THE DOCTRINAIRE MARXIST LEADERSHIP OF THE MPLA HAS RECENTLY STATED IT WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY OF THE PRINCIPAL LEADERS OF THE FNLA OR UNITA INTO THEIR GOVERNMENT; SOME MINOR OFFICIALS OF THE DEFEATED FACTIONS MAY BE BROUGHT IN, PRESUMABLY TO GAIN THE ALLEGIANCE OF SUPPORTERS OF SAVIMBI AND ROBERTO.

AS OF FEBRUARY 17, 38 OF THE 46 OAU MEMBERS HAVE RECOGNIZED THE MPLA, THOUGH ZAIRE AND ZAMBIA HAVE SO FAR REFRAINED. FRANCE WAS THE FIRST WESTERN STATE TO RECOGNIZE AND WE EXPECT MOST OTHER AFRICAN, WESTERN AND THIRD WORLD STATES TO RECOGNIZE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. WE DO NOT INTEND, HOWEVER, TO MOVE SOON TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH THE MPLA SINCE THAT WOULD UNDERCUT OUR OPPOSITION TO THE ROLE OF THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN ANGOLA. WHEN ASKED ON THIS, WE MAKE THE POINT THAT OUR QUARREL IS NOT WITH THE MPLA PER SE BUT WITH THE MASSIVE INTERVENTION OF THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA TO IMPOSE A MINORITY REGIME AS THE GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA.

DESPITE THE COLLAPSE OF FNLA/UNITA'S CONVENTIONAL FORCES, WE INTEND TO CONTINUE TO OPPOSE SOVIET INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. WE WILL ENCOURAGE EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN STATES TO PUT MAXIMUM DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE ON THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS TO REDUCE THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE. WE INTEND TO GIVE INCREASED ECONOMIC, MILITARY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT TO ZAIRE AND ZAMBIA. MANY THIRD WORLD STATES WILL DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT AMERICAN RELIABILITY BASED ON OUR STEADFASTNESS IN SUPPORTING OUR FRIENDS IN THIS CONFLICT, CONCLUSIONS WHICH WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE.

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2. AF - NIGERIAN LEADER KILLED IN COUP ATTEMPT (CONF)

NIGERIA'S HEAD OF STATE, GENERAL MURTALA MUHAMMED, WAS ASSASSINATED DURING AN UNSUCCESSFUL COUP ATTEMPT FEBRUARY 13. HIS SUCCESSOR, LT GENERAL OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, WAS ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF AND DE FACTO DEPUTY HEAD OF STATE IN THE MUHAMMED REGIME. A YORUBA, OBASANJO IS CONSIDERED PRO-WESTERN; BUT HE IS A MILITANT NATIONALIST

WITH A QUICK TEMPER. IN JULY 1975 HE ORDERED TROOPS TO SEAL OFF A US EMBASSY ANNEX WHEN HE DECIDED THE US WAS NOT RESPONDING TO A NIGERIAN REQUEST TO VACATE THE BUILDING, AND HIS FIERCE HATRED FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S RACIAL POLICIES BROUGHT HIM AND HIS COLLEAGUES INTO CONFLICT WITH THE US OVER ANGOLA.

THE COUP PLOTTERS APPARENTLY WERE LED BY LT.COL. B.S. DIMKA, RELATED BY MARRIAGE TO GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON, WHO WAS OVERTHROWN BY GENERAL MUHAMMED IN A BLOODLESS COUP JULY 29, 1975. GOWON, NOW A STUDENT IN ENGLAND, HAS DENIED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THE COUP ATTEMPT, WHICH HE HAS CONDEMNED. DIMKA, WHO WAS HEAD OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE NIGERIAN ARMY, REMAINS AT LARGE. HE AND HIS COHORTS SEIZED THE LAGOS RADIO STATION AFTER MUHAMMED'S ASSASSINATION BUT APPARENTLY WERE NOT NUMEROUS ENOUGH TO TAKE CONTROL OF OTHER KEY INSTALLATIONS. TROOPS LOYAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OVERCAME THE PLOTTERS AND RETOOK THE RADIO STATION BY NIGHTFALL. THE RADIO IN IBADAN BROADCAST MARTIAL MUSIC DURING THE COUP, AND THE MILITARY GOVERNOR OF KWARA STATE WAS ASSASSINATED NEAR HIS HOME IN ILORIN (ABOUT 200 MILES FROM LAGOS). IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW THESE EVENTS RELATED TO DIMKA'S ACTIONS IN LAGOS.

DIMKA'S EFFORT TO COMMUNICATE WITH GOWON THROUGH THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION HAS FOCUSED SOME SUSPICION ON THE BRITISH, DESPITE THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S REFUSAL TO CO-OPERATE WITH DIMKA. RUMORS OF CIA INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLOT HAVE LED TO DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST OUR EMBASSY AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN CONSULATE AT IBADAN. THE SHOCK AND ZENO-PHOBIA WHICH GRIP NIGERIA ARE EXPECTED TO BE TEMPORARY PHENOMENA. THERE IS CURRENTLY NO REASON TO BELIEVE THE EVENTS OF FEBRUARY 13 WILL INFLUENCE OUR RELATIONS WITH

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NIGERIA. PLANS FOR A LATE FEBRUARY VISIT TO NIGERIA BY UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON ARE GOING FORWARD. INGERSOLL

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